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ABSTRACT

Research was conducted to determine if 271 college students who identified with patriotism perceived those feelings to be the result of their experiences with athletics. Also investigated were beliefs of the athletic coach's role in the formation of patriotic feelings. A Likert-type survey instrument with 25 items was used to gain responses regarding patriotism, the Olympics, the purpose of athletics, and the effects of televising the Olympics. Respondents were grouped according to their experience in athletics: athletes (213); spectator-athletes (32); and spectators (26). Respondents identified with patriotism, regardless of how the concept was defined. Respondents also felt that nationalism or patriotism should be a concern of athletic coaches, although they did not feel that coaches' efforts in that area were significant in shaping the patriotic feelings. Responses are displayed. (CB)

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Patriotism or Nationalism as a Value of Athletics

by
Robert W. Koehler

Introduction

Every four years the attention of the world is drawn to the achievements of athletes in the Winter and Summer Olympics as another Olympiad becomes a part of history. The news media tallies, reports and proclaims medal winners individually and by national association. The controversy generates as to why some athletes do as they do. It has been maintained that some are "...crusading to win recognition and prestige for their government" (USNWR, 1984). Or, the truimph of communist country athletes enhance and helps impress other countries and win over friends (USNWR, 1984). Inversely, athletes of the United States and western bloc countries are characterized as considering, "its fun to compete with the rest of the world" (USNWR, 1984). A relationship between politics, nationalism and athletic performance is implied.

Historians have long recorded a relationship between sport, athletics and, or similar physical activities and national purpose. The children of Persia and Sparta were educated in the physical skills to preserve the respective empires and cultures. In Germany the turnervin of Jahn was charged with too much political idealism (AI, 1972). Sir Arnold Lund states, "in the modern world, sport has a prestige and an influence comparable to that of the church in medieval Europe" (Hart, 1972). The role of sport to an emerging or developing nation's identity has been stated thus, "Canadian participation in international competitive events is emerging as an important aspect of a growing spirit of nationhood" (Hart, 1972).

The spirit of nationhood is the result of why the individual is involved in play..."he doesn't play that he may win, but that his side may win"... (Hart, 1972). And, when the side is his country or nation, the winning helps bring recognition to that country or nation. In the United States the influence of sport on politics has been considerable (Hart, 1972), but, is the feeling an athlete has toward his or her country the result of the coach and atheltics? It has been stated in another way, "even the lone runner cannot escape his association with club or town, county or country" (Hart, 1972).

Baron Peirre de Coubertin in the revival of the Olympics wanted the youth of the world involved in national programs which would develop them physically and in sports skills. He stated, "You may be sure that in working for the cause of sport you are working for your country" (CDI, 1966). The relationship could concievably lead to the shaping of feelings about one's country.

It may be questioned as to whether or not the athlete or participant identifies with the feelings about their country as a result of athletics or sport.

Problem

Although a relationship exists between sport, athlete and country, does the athlete preceive his feelings about his country to be an extension of that relationship and the coaches, and, is nationalism or patriotism a value in athletics or sport?

Purpose

This research was conducted to determine if a population sample identifying with patriotism preceived those feelings to be the results of their experiences in or from athletics, if the coach played a significant role in the formation of those feelings, and if patriotism is viewed as a value from athletics.

Hypotheses

Although the population was demographically divided by self-identity response, it is supposition that the population...

1. ...will identify with attitude(s) of patriotism.
2. ...will not consider patriotism or nationalism to be a value of athletics addressed by coaches.
3. ...will view patriotism as coming from experiences other than athletics.
4. ...will not widely recognize the nationalistic purposes of the Olympics as expressed by de Coubertin and television has very little influence on attitudes of patriotism.

Definitions

Within the context of this study these terms should be understood as follows:

Patriotism is the general positive feeling of a person toward their country. Generally, it is 'love of country' with or without some other qualifying aspect. And, nationalism is considered synomonous with patriotism.

Athlete is an individual who is or has been associated with a high school or college sport and perceives his or her self to be an athlete.

Spectator is an individual who has never been a part of a high school or college sport team and perceives his or her self to be a spectator.

Athletics is a personal sport experience during high school or college involving competition at the high school, college or international level.

Olympics is the ancient sports festival of Olympia, Greece revived and modernized by Baron Pierre de Coubertin in 1896. The purposes of the games are to:

a. Bring to the attention of the world the fact that a national program of physical training and competitive sport will not only develop stronger and healthier boys and girls but also and perhaps more important, will make better and happier citizens through character building that follows participation in properly administered amateur sport.
b. Demonstrate the principles of fair play and good sportsmanship, which could be adapted with great advantage in many other spheres of activity.
c. Stimulate interest in the fine arts through exhibitions, concerts, and demonstrations during the Games period, and thus contribute to a broader and more well-rounded life.
d. Teach that sport is played for fun and enjoyment and not to make money, and, that with devotion to the task at hand, the reward will take care of itself...
e. Create international amity and good will, thus leading to a happier and more peaceful world.

Value is an idea to which worth or meaning has been attached and a commitment is made by a person to retain or preserve the idea for the benefit of self or others.

Methods and Procedures

A survey instrument consisting of twenty five (25) items was utilized to gain response from individuals about patriotism, the Olympics, purpose of athletics, the effect of televising the Olympics, and the basis of feelings. Although there are five groups of statements, the statements were alternated to provide a mix and avoid loading answers toward a perceived end.

Methods

The Likert Scale response technique was the basis for the survey. However, because a decisiveness in feeling toward a statement was sought, the scale was modified to exclude the undecided response category. The participant had to make a positive response (strongly agree, agree) or a negative response (disagree, strongly disagree). The had to think about how they felt about the item and then respond without the benefit of no response. This approach also provided some flexibility for the respondent.

Statements relative to patriotism were used to sample how the respondent felt about his or her country. No attempt was made to identify if the respondent was a patriot, because this status is the result of action and commitment toward the preservation of those nationalistic feelings. And, it was felt that several definitions of patriotism would provide a base for some acceptance; whereas, a single

definition would increase the possibility for disagreement with the respondent still having feelings of patriotism.

Therefore, if governmental leaders with different demographic characteristics provided definitions (sex, ethnic background), the possibility for paralleling the feelings of a respondent would be increased. Disagreement would then be with the concept of patriotism and not merely an insufficient statement. Politicians whose definitions were used:

Adlai Stevenson, Senator, Illinois
Carl Schurz, Senator, 1869-75
Ed Brooke, Senator, Massachusetts
M. Chase Smith, Senator, Maine
Richard Hatcher, Mayor, Gary, Indiana
Lucy Wilson Benson, President, League of Women's Voters

Selected definitions:

"Our country right or wrong. When right, to be kept right; when wrong, to be put right." (Carl Schurz)

"Patriotism is love of country informed by the understanding that one's country must live up to the ideals it proclaims." (Ed Brooke)

"A patriot is not only one who loves his country but one who will defend liberty." (M. Chase Smith)

"Patriotism is the full and insistent use of the freedoms protected by our basic documents." (Richard Hatcher)

"Patriotism is love of country; accepting responsibility for our Government and our community; recognizing that our love and order depend on equal justice for all; and understanding that in a democratic society the vote rather than violence is the primary instrument of change." (Lucy Wilson Benson)

The purposes of the Olympics as established by Pierre de Coubertin were used to assess if these values were evident in the Olympics and athletics. And, because these purposes are national in scope, they bare a relationship to the intent and purpose of sport. The basic idea expressed in each purpose is as follows:

1. National training programs leading to healthier and happier citizens.
2. Fair play and sportsmanship carrying over to other aspects of life.
3. Interest in the fine arts leading to a more well-rounded life.
4. Sport for fun and enjoyment, the joy of effort.
5. International amity and good will.

Purpose was further extended to include an expressed difference between Western bloc countries and Eastern bloc socialistic countries. It was stated on television during the Winter Olympics and in U.S. News and World Report (2/20/84) that in Eastern bloc countries, "Athletics is basically crusading to win recognition and prestige for the government." The athlete of Western bloc countries are characterized as fun lovers, "its fun to compete with the world."

Essential to the assessment was identifying factors which shaped or influenced the Athlete's feelings toward the country. The statement, "my feelings toward my country have (or have not) been influenced by...", was the basis for the assessment and included these parameters: national anthem, athletic participation, coaches, own experience, viewing sport or athletics, family experience and viewing the Olymics on television.

As a result of this method and design the following statements were developed and forwarded to the participating population for response:

1. The patriots are those who love America enough to wish to see her as a model to mankind.

2. My feelings toward my country have been influenced by athletics and the national anthem.

3. My feelings about my country are really not affected by the Olympics on televsion.

4. Our country right or wrong. When right, to be kept right; when wrong, to be put right.

5. My feelings toward my country have been influenced by the televising of the Olympic games.

6. The pursuit of excellence is a purpose of the Olympic performer.

7. Patriotism is love of country informed by the understanding that one's country must live up to the ideals it proclaims.

8. My feelings toward my country have been influenced by athletic participation.

9. The general level of physical fitness for the country is improved through national training programs because of the Olympics and brings about healthier and happier citizens.

10. Athletics is basically crusading to win recognition and prestige for the government.

11. A patriot is not only one who loves his country but one who will defend liberty.

12. My feelings toward my country have never really been the concern of my coaches.

13. In athletics its basically fun to compete with anyone.

14. My interest in art, music and other cultural aspects has been developed through my interest in the Olympics.

15. Patriotism is full and insistent use of the freedoms protected by our basic documents.

16. My feelings toward my country have been shaped by my own experiences, not necessarily athletics.

17. Without a doubt fair play and good sportsmanship is stressed and evident in the Olympics.

18. As a spectator I've gained national pride and love of country by viewing sports and atheltics.

19. Patriotism is love of country; accepting responsibility for our Government and our community; recognizing that love and order depend on equal justice for all; and understanding that in a democratic society the vote rather than violence is the primary instrument of change.

20. My feelings toward my country have been shaped by my experiences with my family.

21. The triumph of the athlete helps to impress other countries and win over friends.

22. The Olympics helps to develop better understanding between people and countries.

23. My feelings toward my country are the results of the efforts of the coaches.

24. Nationalism and patriotism are values of no concern to a coach in the athletic setting.

25. The joy of effort really comes through in Olympic competition.

Population

Three midwestern universities were identified to provide approximately 300 student respondents. A proportionate number of

college students in physical education (N=141) and athletics (N=130) participated as respondents (N=271). Although gender was not a significant aspect of the study, there were N=117 females and N=154 males in the population. Because the athlete respondents came from one of the universities, the disportionately larger number of physical education respondents came the other two universities.

Respondents were grouped according to their experience in athletics and their perceived status:

Athlete is or was a member of a high school or college athletic team, competed and perceives his or her self to be an athlete (N=213).

Spectator-Athlete was a member of an athletic team, competed and perceives the self as a spectator (N=32).

Spectator never belonged to an athletic team and never competed (N=26).

Total N=271

Procedure

A personal request was made of selected faculty at three midwestern universities. Following a verbal acceptance, a letter of explanation and appropriate forms were forwarded. The cooperating faculty returned all forms within three weeks with 271 of 300 survey forms utilized.

Data and Analysis

Aside from comparing group size or N(number) and the percentage of response, the chi square test for independence was used at the .01 level of significance.

The data was divided into five groups for statistical treatment. Analysis of the data by chi square showed that the items within each group are related. The groups examined were: Patriotism, Olympic Ideals, Purpose, Feelings and Olympism and Television.

Patriotism

TABLE 1, PATRIOTISM ITEMS

Items No.	Contents	A or D	Athlete	Ath & Spe	Spect'r	Total
1	Love Country As	A	190	30	24	244
	Model Of Mankind	D	21	2	1	24
4	Put Country To	A	186	29	23	238
	Be Right	D	27	2	2	31
7	Is Love Of One's	A	188	29	24	241
	Count'y	D	19	3	1	23
11	Who Will Defend	A	189	30	22	241
	Liberty	D	24	2	3	29
15	Full Use Of The	A	157	23	20	200
	Freedom Protected	D	54	9	4	67
19	Accept Respnsbty	A	184	32	25	241
	For Our Gov't	D	25	0	0	25

Six items were used to provide an opportunity for a respondent to identify some expressed feeling about the country. Only one (1) respondent in an N of 271 disagreed with all of the statements on patriotism; whereas, the majority (N=270) agreed with three or more of the statements.

Athletes, athlete/spectators and spectator (N=270) agreed in total with a definition of patriotism.

TABLE 2, OLYMPIC IDEALS

Items No.	Contents	A or D	Athlete	Ath & Spe	Spect'r	Total
6	Pursuit Of	A	189	28	17	234
	Excellence	D	19	4	7	30
9	Improve Of Level	A	146	22	17	185
	Of Phy Fitness	D	66	10	8	84
14	Develop Interest	A	36	4	2	42
	In Cultural Aspt	D	174	28	23	225
17	Stress Fair Play	A	177	28	23	228
	Good Sportsmansp	D	32	4	2	38
22	Better Underst'g	A	164	27	21	212
	People Country	D	46	5	3	54
25	Gives Joy Of	A	185	32	23	240
	Effort In Comp'n	D	25	0	1	26

The stated purposes of the Olympics were identifable by the three populations with one exception. The cultural purpose on aspect was not viewed by the three groups (84%) as readily evident. The other ideals of excellence, physical fitness, fair play amicability, and joy of effort were recognized. And, the populations felt that a better understanding between people and countries did result from the olympics.

Purpose

TABLE 3, PURPOSE

Items No.	Contents	A or D	Athlete	Ath & Spe	Spect'r	Total
10	To Win Recognition	A	61	8	9	78
	Prstg For Gov't	D	152	24	16	192
13	Fun To Compete	A	177	28	21	226
	With Anyone	D	34	2	4	40
21	Impress Other	A	109	14	14	137
	Cntry & Win Frnd	D	103	18	11	132
24	Coaches Not Help	A	75	8	8	91
	In Patrim & Nationali	D	136	24	15	175

Whether or not athletics play a role in gaining visibility for the government proved to be a dilemma for the sample. Clearly the population felt it was not the purpose of athletics to win recognition and prestige for the government (71%), although they agreed that the Olympics helped to produce better understanding between people and countries (80%).

The population sample was indecisive as to whether or not the triumph of the athlete impressed other countries and won over friends (agreed 51%) [N=132], disagreed 49% [N=132] in an N of 271).

Additionally, the population sample disagreed that nationalism or patriotism is a value of no concern to the coach in the athletic setting (6[illegible]%).

All groups felt that 'fun to compete with anyone' was important (84%) in athletics.

Shaping Feelings

TABLE 4, SHAPING FEELINGS

Items No.	Contents	A or D	Athlete	Ath & Spe	Spect'r	Total
2	Influenced By Athl	A	152	20	15	187
	& National Anthem	D	61	12	11	84
8	Influenced by	A	130	14	11	155
	Athletic Particpa	D	82	18	15	115
12	Never Really Been	A	144	22	17	183
	Concrn Of My Coach	D	69	9	9	87
16	Own Experience Not	A	182	30	24	236
	Necessarily Athlet	D	28	2	2	32
18	Love Country View	A	174	27	17	218
	Sports & Athletics	D	36	5	8	49
20	Shaped By My Exper	A	176	28	23	227
	With My Family	D	34	4	2	40
23	Results of Effort	A	30	2	2	34
	Of The Coaches	D	180	30	22	232

Regardless of group membership the respondent felt that his or her feelings toward their country was influenced by, shaped by, or resulted from...:

... their own experiences not necessarily athletics (87%).
... experiences with their family (84%).
... viewing sports and athletics (80%).
... athletics and the national anthem (69%).

Participation in athletics as influencing factor was important to the athletes (61%); whereas, the athlete/spectator (56%) and spectator (57%) disagreed on participation as influencing factor.

Notably the three populations felt their feelings toward their country (patriotism) were never a concern of coaches (67%) and were not the result of the efforts of the coaches (87%).

Olympics and Television

TABLE 5, T.V. INFLUENCES

Items No.	Contents	A or D	Athlete	Ath & Spe	Spect'r	Total
3	Not Affected By	A	45	8	8	61
	Olympics On T.V.	D	86	19	11	116
5	Influenced by TV'g	A	109	19	11	139
	The Olympic Games	D	40	8	8	56

Although the number and percentage appears high for the respondents who agreed that the televising of the olympics affected their feelings on patriotism, this population actually represents only 43% (item #3 disagree) and 51% (item #5 agree) of the total N of 271. The other half of the respondents were indecisive as to whether televising the olympics did or did not affect their feelings toward their country.

Patriotism for these groups was influenced by other experiences, namely their own and with family. However, the viewing of athletics and sport, and the national anthem did influence their feelings of patriotism, although participation in athletics may not be an influential factor.

The nationalistic purposes of the Olympics as expressed by de Coubertein were readily identified and met with agreements. Ideals such as the pursuit of excellence, physical fitness, fair play and sportsmanship, joy of effort in competition, and developing better understanding between people and countries seem to be functionally manifested through the Olympics. The exception to the visibility of the Olympic ideals was the concept that interest in the fine arts and other cultural aspects could be broadened. It is evident that this ideal is not readily visible and identifable.

The fine arts have long been a part of the Olympic tradition. The Games cultural component extends back to the days of ancient Greece, when athletes were immortalized in sculpture and verse for their victories. In the modern era, Olympic competitions were held in

the fine arts until 1948. Since that time, arts celebrations have been an integral part of the Olympics. However, it is the ideals as related to athletic performance which are more visible.

Although better understanding between people and countries could be developed, this population did not extend this belief to include the socialistic concept that athletics is basically crusading to win recognition and prestige for the government. They adhered to the individualistic concept that athletics is basically 'fun through competition with anyone.' The impact of the athletes' triumph on winning friends and impressing other countries was questionable, which tends to support the individualistic goal of 'fun in competition.'

Also of questionable influence on patriotism was the televising of the Olympics. Indecisiveness or confusion caused by the statements on televising the Olympics may have masked the result or end.

It can be concluded that the coaches role in shaping patriotism was not significant, but they should be involved. And, patriotism is and should be a value of athletics for the feelings about country are influenced.

Conclusions

Prior to the administration of the survey instrument, collection of the data and its treatment, it was assumed that the sample:

...would identify with the attitude(s) of patriotism.

...would not consider patriotism or nationalism to be a value of athletics addressed by the coaches.

...would view patriotism as coming from experiences other than athletics.

...would not widely recognize the nationalistic purposes of the Olympics as expressed by de Coubertin and television has very little influence on attitudes of patriotism.

Regardless of how patriotism was defined the sample of athletes, athlete/spectators and spectators identified with patriotism in toti. Patriotism or feelings toward ones' country was apart of this sample population.

And, they felt that nationalism or patriotism should be a concern of coaches in the athletic setting, although their feelings toward their country were never really the concern of the coach. And, the efforts of the coaches were not significant in shaping the feelings of patriotism for these groups. Nationalism or patriotism should be a value of concern to the coach in the athletic setting.

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